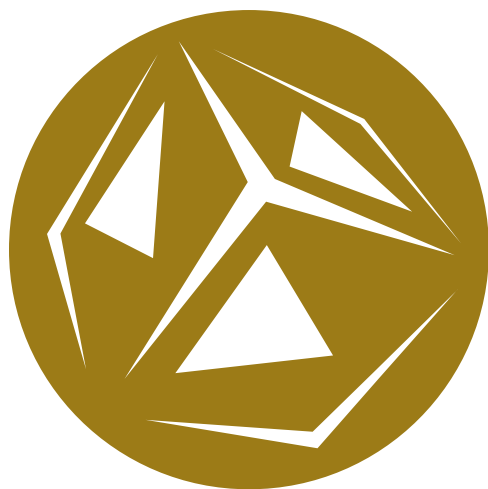


RollPlay



GM NOTEBOOK
ISSUE TWENTYFIVE

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1

Hello Patrons!

It seems like we had two big arcs end at the same time! With the splitting of the Court of Swords party into two groups for Season Five, we'll be following Yoji into the east to find his family and seek out the dragons, so I've included my extremely spoilery prep for that in this issue. After a terrible tragedy on a rooftop on Hong Lu, we rolled up some new characters for the second season of Far Verona - you'll find my prep for that in here, along with updated relationship maps. Lastly, a visit to Neo-Tokyo wouldn't be complete without a little Bomb Threat!

Thank you so much for your support, and welcome to Issue 25 of the GM's Notebook.

Adam Koebel
RollPlay GM



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3.

FAR VERONA:

SEASON 02

PREP





EPISODE ELEVEN +

GM GOALS

- × Continue to expand on the core concepts defined in GM Prep for episode 01
- × Introduce themes that tie the new characters to the ongoing universe / campaign structure
- × Show off new stuff from Acheron Rho / Expand the universe



What / Why?

▼ PRIMARY:

- × Help protect imperial interests on Berkmann III by working with the High Church to deal with some dissidents in the serf population of that planet.

▼ SECONDARY:

- × Find out if Elder Sinclair has been co-opted by the UPC





SECRET HOUSE VELA SIDE MISSION

- × Spy on the Trilliant Ring's operation on Berkmann III and report back to House Vela for the benefit of the STO.



Where?

Berkmann III, New Antioch Settlement

Who?

Three main power players on Berkmann

- I. The High Church
- II. The Trilliant Ring
- III. The People of Berkmann III

The *High Church* wants what it always wants - conversion of the people and through faith, their reintegration into Imperial society. They want to placate any effort to destabilize the planet and to put down any effort to convert or disrupt the populace by external enemies (CHR, UPC, Vagrant, etc).

The *Trilliant Ring* on Berkmann III want a profitable workforce, influence over the planet and its operation and to protect their interests here. Berkmann III is a major transit hub to the rest of the Sector.

The *People of Berkmann III* want a bunch of stuff, but we're not concerned with the Reunifiers, we just want to focus on the dissidents and troublemakers.

■ Conflict

- × Conflict between The High Church and the People
- × Conflict between Trilliant and the People
- × Conflict between Crux and the Church / Trilliant Alliance
- × Conflict between Church and Trilliant

■ NPCs

- × **Reverend Elder Miguela Sinclair**, a High Church Priest responsible for the flock in New Antioch
- × Trilliant Section Chief in Charge of Human Resources, **Linus Reed** (a cool cyborg)
- × Herzogin Crux **Ramirez Elise**, a local functionary of House Crux and liason to the crew (she's the "aunt" of the Ramirez who died on the crew)
- × The Mayor of New Antioch, **Brigham Afolayan**, loyal to the Empire and a staunch supported of Berkmann's return to the fold
- × Pastor **Tal'at Lau**, a rabble rouser and member of the Anarchist faction of Berkmann
- × **Sibyl Albers**, leader of the People for an Independent Berkmann, a violent nationalist movement to free Berkmann from political and corporate control

■ The Situation as it Stands

- × The PIB has been attacking Trilliant facilities, holding rallies and infiltrating the populace of New Antioch
- × Their core supporter, a community organizer and Pastor Tal'at Lau has been preaching a new future for Berkmann, one free of Corporate or Imperial meddling
- × The Reverend Sinclair has been trying to peacefully bring Lau and the mayor, Brigham Afolayan to the table for talks with little success due to the PIB's influence
- × Section Chief Reed has been pushing House Crux to come deal with the PIB problem (which includes Lau) because it's slowing down his production
- × Reed has also been pressuring Reverend Sinclair to forget about Lau and turn him in
- × Herzogin Crux just wants the law upheld, there's destruction of property and rebellion and general serf bullshit that needs handling

■ The PC's Mandate

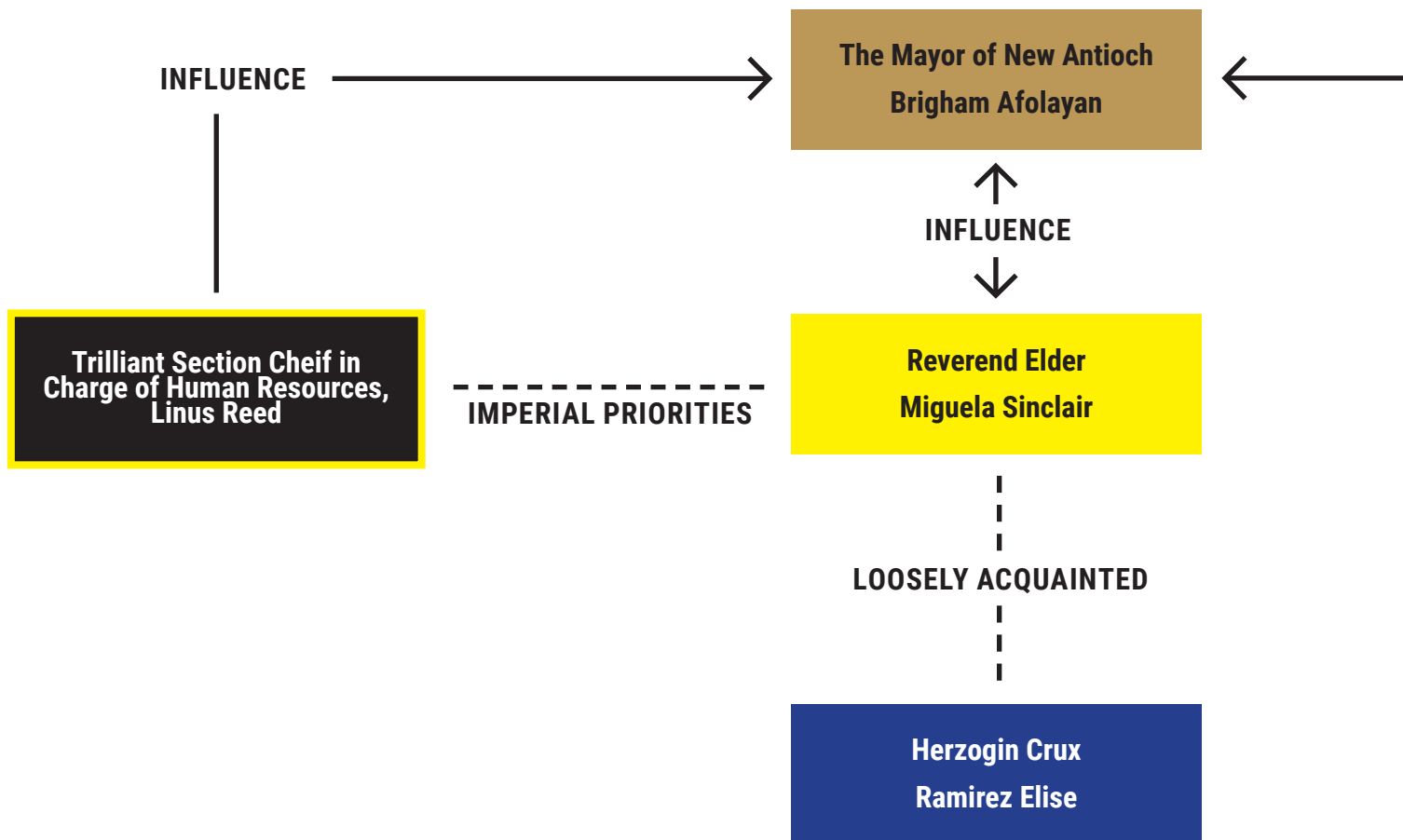
- × Uncover the ringleaders of the PIB and deal them a whole bunch of sweet imperial justice (what is the punishment? how are they dealt with, etc.)
- × Maintain positive relations between the Trilliant Ring, House Crux and the High Church

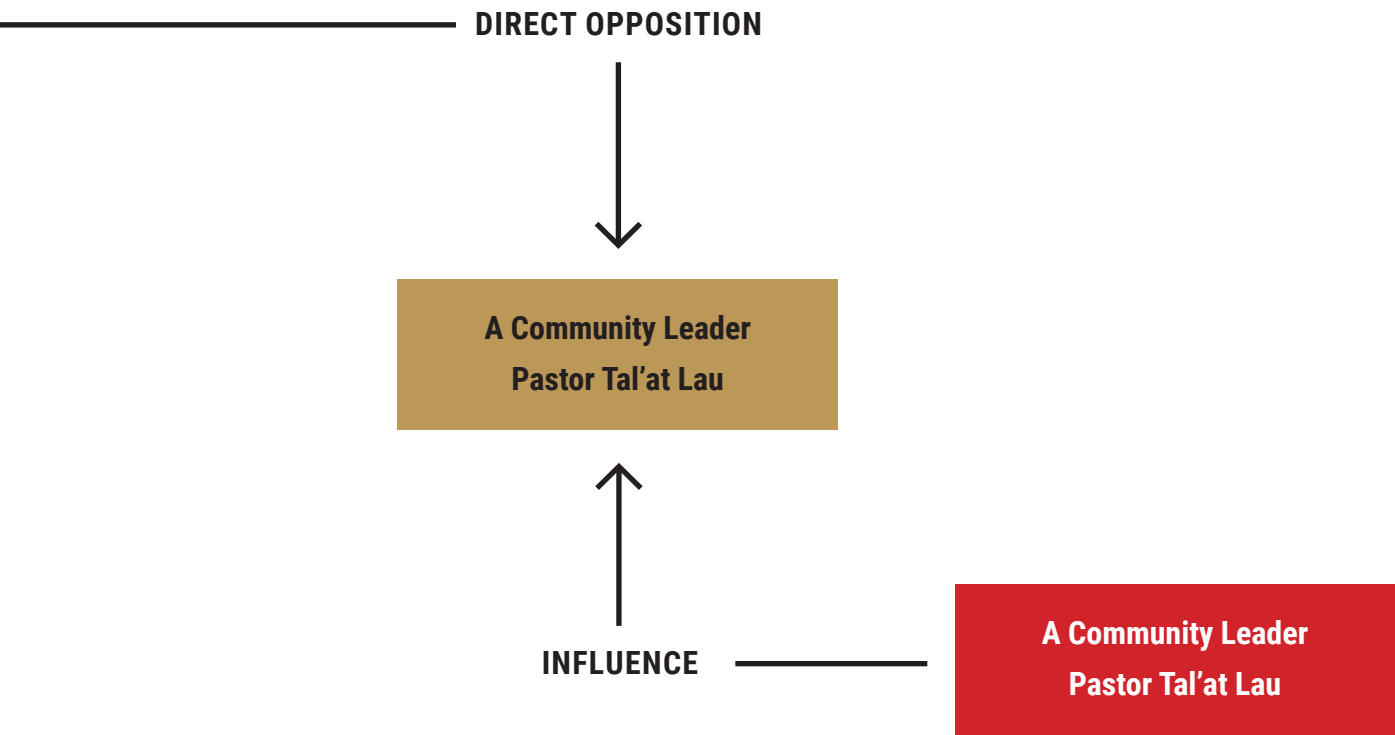
■ What if the PC's Never Showed Up

- × The Mayor doesn't push hard enough on the PIB's influence (because of Elder Sinclair) allowing them to spread violence further
- × Trilliant responds by replacing the Mayor with a puppet
- × Pogrom against suspected PIB operatives
- × Sinclair is killed under mysterious circumstances (Crux assassins? Trilliant robomurderers? The PIB is blamed, regardless)
- × A period of bombings and assassinations of High Church and Trilliant assets
- × Lau and Albers are both captured and executed publicly
- × In the end, New Antioch is a firmly corporate town, with Church influence at a high level



4. WELCOME TO BERKMANN





5

Court of Swords: Family is Hell: Episode 1

Goals:

- Establish the mechanical and narrative function of the new characters
- Launch the season with a bang
- Begin after the beginning
- Ask lots of questions

Scene:

The characters are in conflict with some monstrous foes who are between them and their goal. What is their goal? Who sent them? What are they doing right now that got them in this position?

Choose the enemies to oppose them but don't figure out why - pick something cool and fun to fight and then give it context after the fact.

The Tomb

The tomb contains an elder giant of the underworld, is protected by horrors and was

sealed by magic until the PCs came along and effed it up.

There is a cursed ward on the door to the final room;

It is a **GLYPH OF WARDING** containing **BESTOW CURSE**

Choose one ability score. While cursed, the target has disadvantage on Ability Checks and Saving Throws made with that ability score.

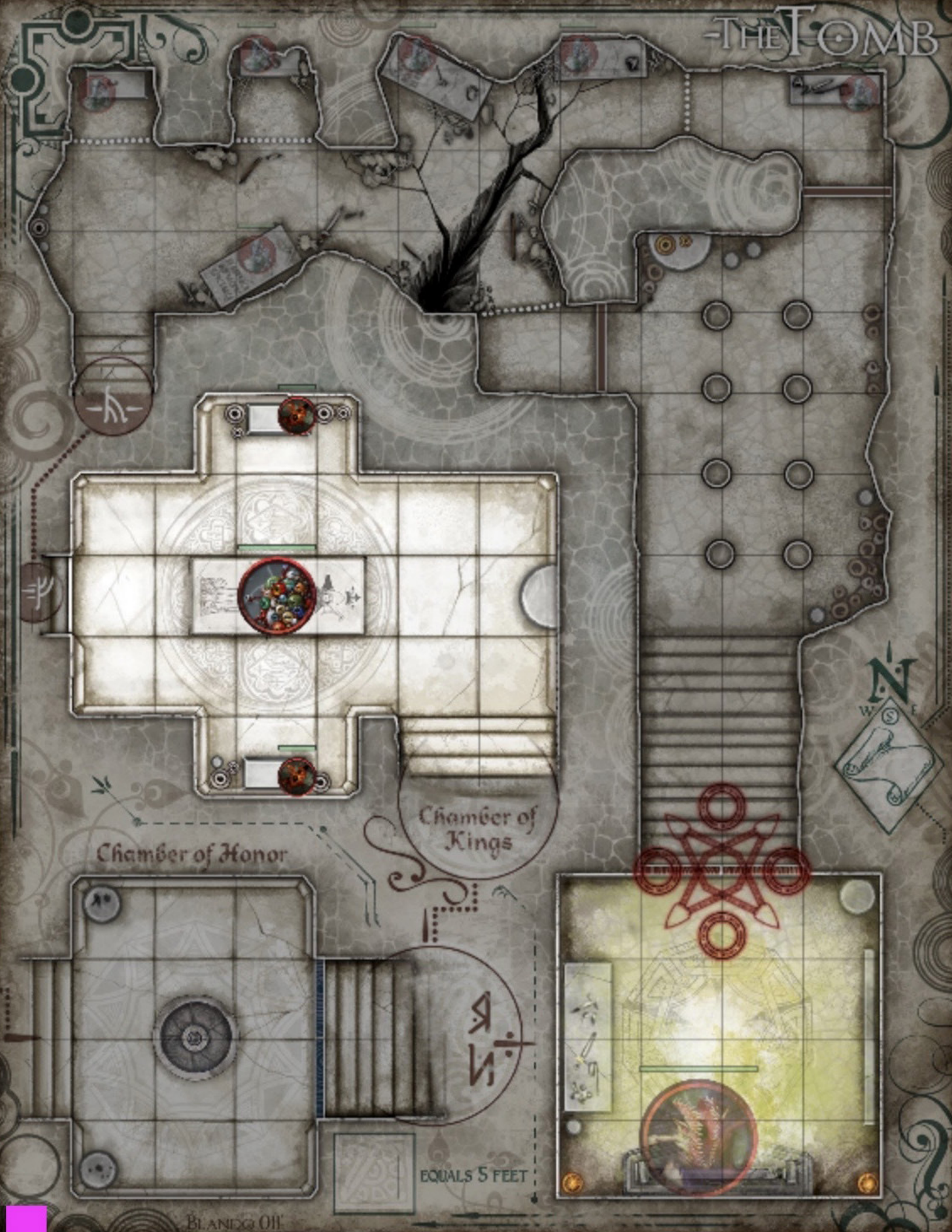
The ward targets **WISDOM**

In Abyssal, the ward reads;

“Beyond lieth Cthaabbar, Terrible King of the Realms Below, His Reign Endeth and All Rejoice - Disturb Not His Slumber Or Be Ye a Fool”

What's In the Tomb? Why are We Here?

Ask the players!



Court of Swords // Season 5 - Family is Hell // Fronts

The Mara Death Cult

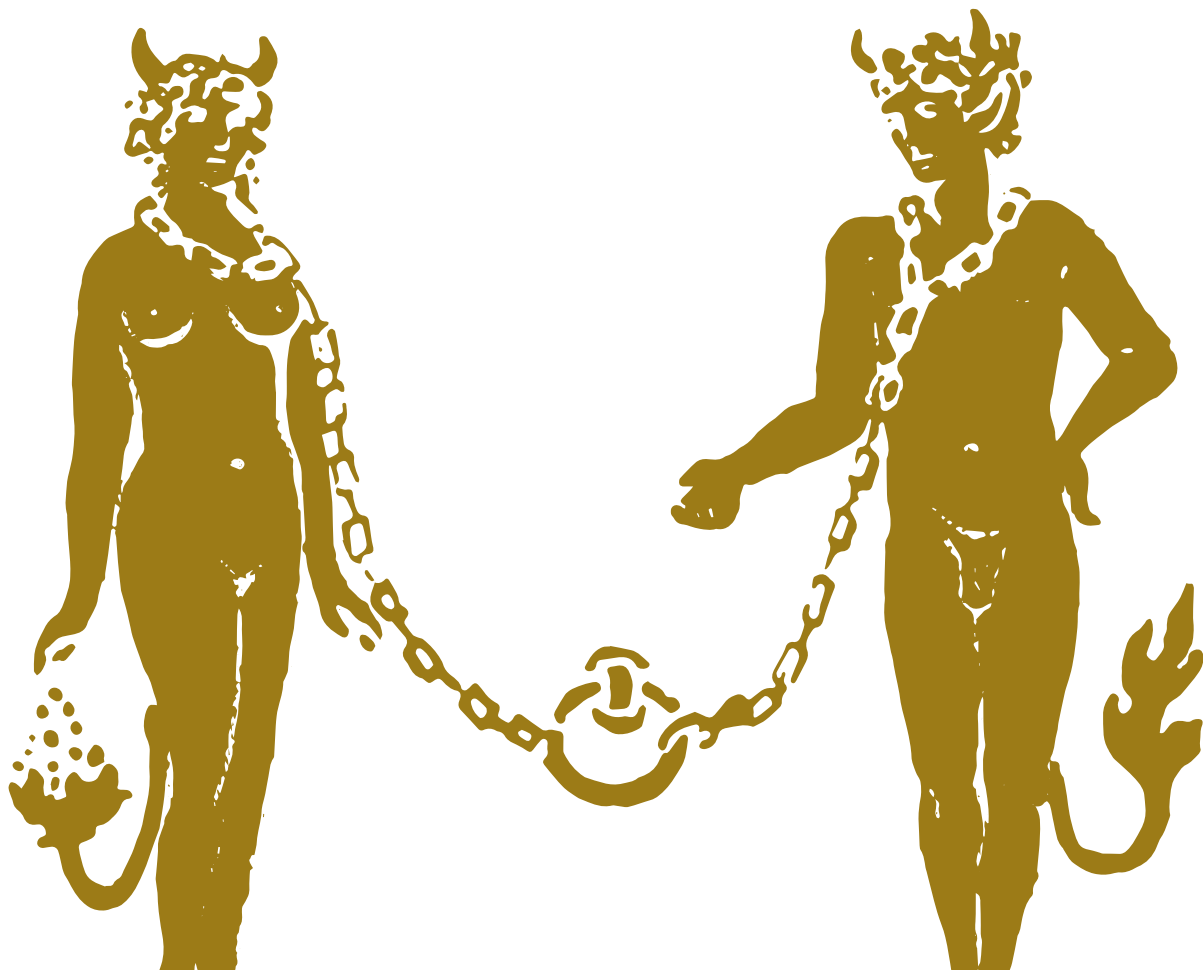
Doom: The Cult coopts some deep seated power structure and becomes seeded throughout the Court.

- ☒ Ancient knowledge of a ritual is unearthed
- ☐ Several Cult factions are allied under a single leader
- ☐ A ceremonial wedding gives unity to the Cult
- ☐ A skirmish with Mara cultists nets a sympathetic link to their master
- ☐ A powerful entity is captured
- ☐ A member of the Court itself (King, Queen, Page or Knight) is inducted into the Cult

The Demon Hunters

Doom: The Cult is exposed, its members arrested, killed or otherwise purged.

- ☒ The Hunters learn of the Cult's existence
- ☐ Members of the Cult are captured
- ☐ A minor Cult holding is compromised
- ☐ The location of the Cult stronghold is located
- ☐ A major raid on a cult facility, featuring the Hunters and Court army troops
- ☐ The Cult's members are rounded up and the cult dispersed



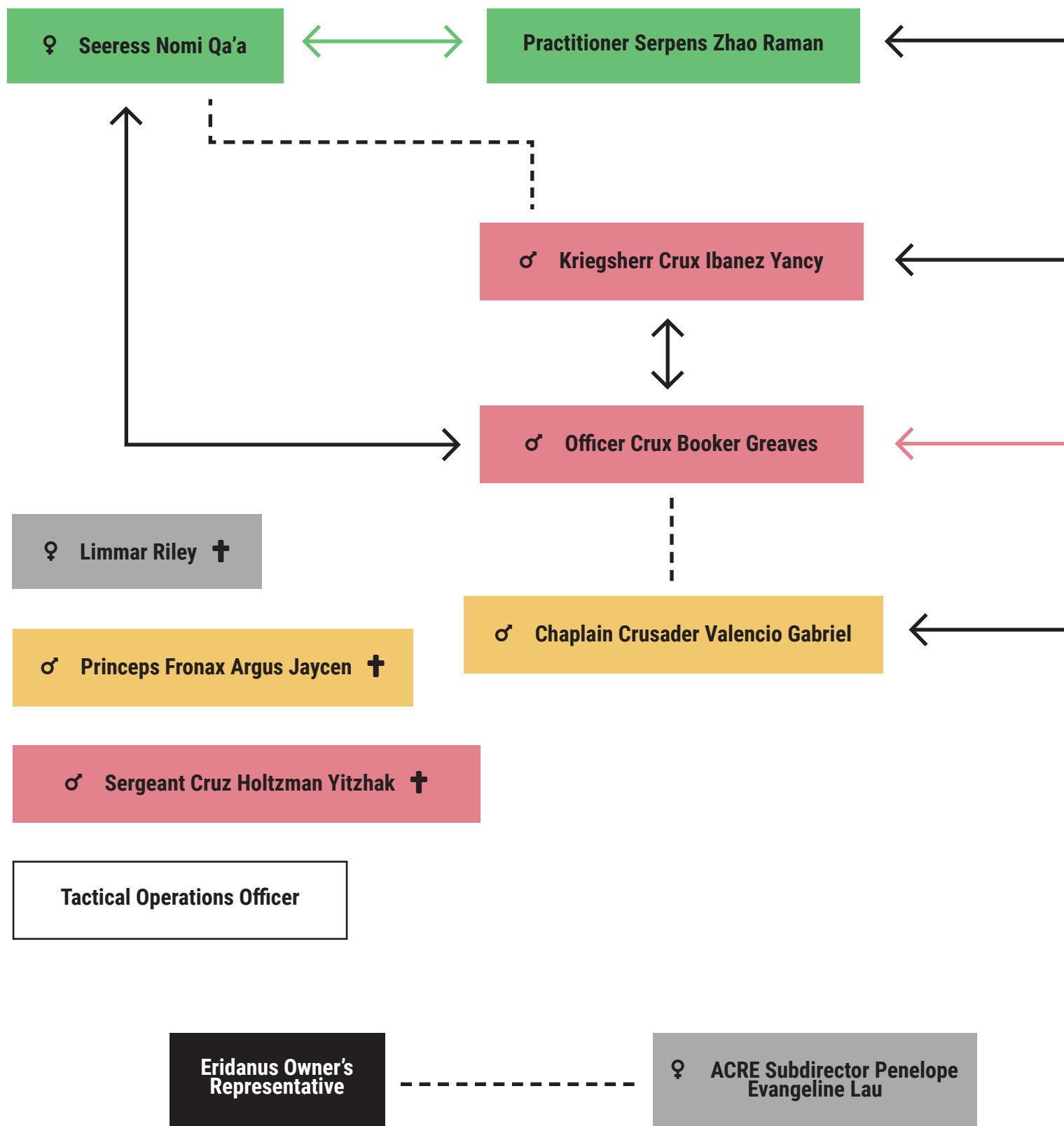
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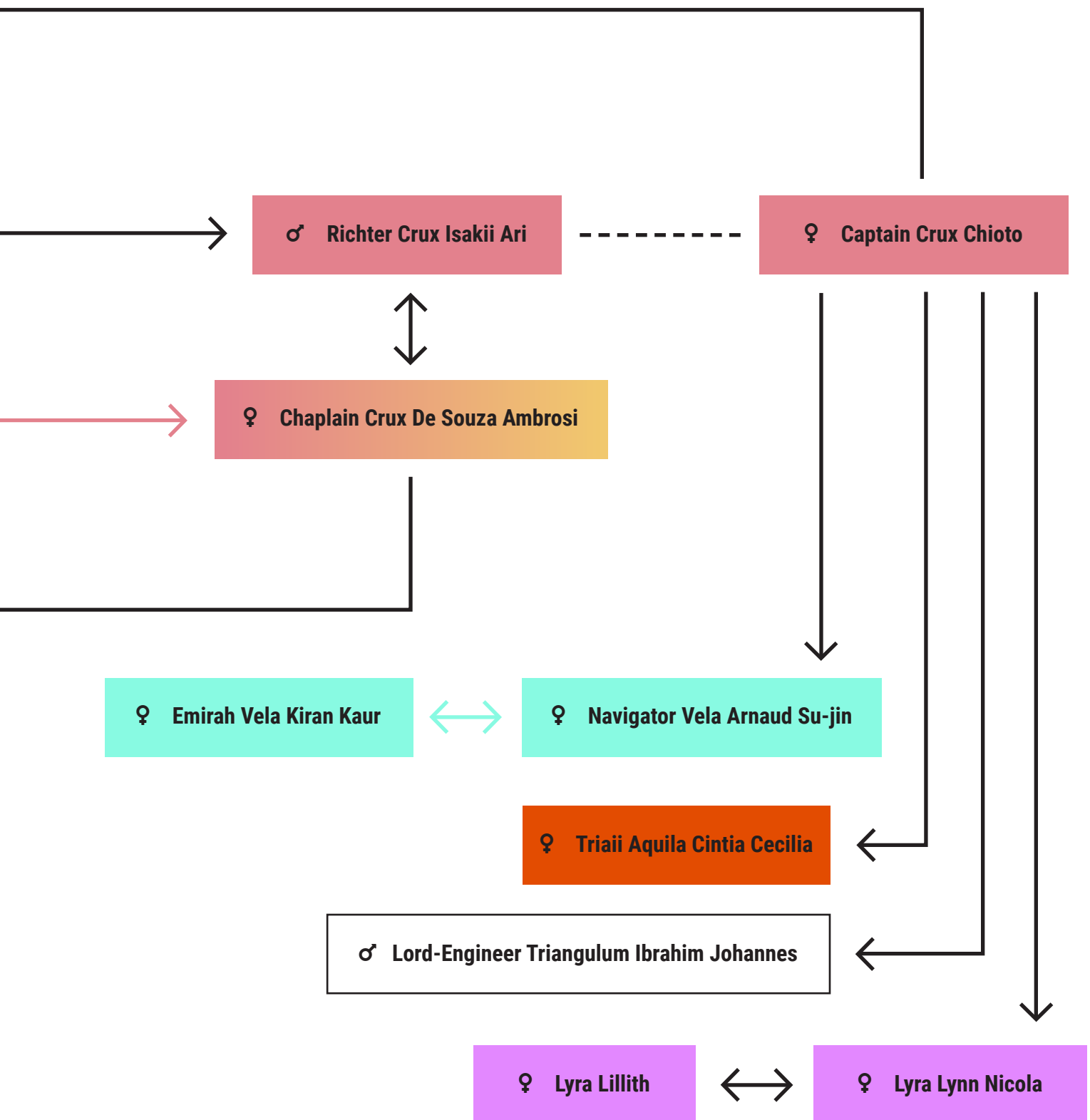
FAR VERONA:

UPDATED
DRAMATIS
PERSONAE



6. Updated Dramatis Personae





Japan in 2050 (nihon teikoku, Japanese Imperial State)

- fifteen years ago, a war between Fuchi + Asakura corp tore up Tokyo, which is being rebuilt in places
- Metahumans (orks + trolls, by and large) are forced to live on Yomi Island, a concentration camp
- dwarves = Koborokuru elves = ? orks = oni trolls = ? Narita Spaceport
- Japan is 100% corporate controlled, basically

① Renraku Computer Systems

② Shiawase Corporation

→ NPC corp

③ Yamatetsu Bioworks

④ Mitsuhamma Computers

⑤ Fuchi Industrial Electronics
(Nakatomi)

Locations of Interest:

• Tokyo (called NeoTokyo)

↳ Akihabara Electric Town (nerd shit)
Roppongi Hills (Takahashi's apartment)
Chiba (cyberclinics)
Chiyoda (govt)
Shinjuku (corps ~ Fujihara HQ)
Shibuya (youth culture)
Asakusa (residential + temple dist.)
Ikebukuro Station (owls)
Odaiba (robot park)

* Crash Cart = hospitals + ambulance

* The Cube = huge hotel (coffin)

* House of Green leaves (geisha)

Gangs = Zoku

boso-zoku = speed gangs

eriki-zoku = hacker gangs

Watada Rengo = Yakuza org (mita-gumi)

CRUSHER = learn about Yomi island

BREAKDOWN = Ikebukuro owl spirits

BONBON = Eriki-zoku + dad meeting

* **NIGHTSASS** = fans in Harajuku

① When they arrive in Tokyo, Takahashi has set up rooms for them in the Park Hyatt Tokyo and wishes to retire to his home. He will contact them in the morning.

② The next day he takes them shopping.

③ Then he wants them to find out more about Nakamoto Akiko before she finds out they are here

a) she is a loyal Shiawase employee

b) she seems to spend a lot of time in Akiba

c) she has a boyfriend trapped on Yomi Island

d) she works for the Yakuza to pay for his care/safety

e) she wants to sell out Fujihara so that the Yaks can move in and buy it out

7. GM Notebook

Mirrorshades Episode 14

COMMENTARY

Japan in 2050

Most of the information I got about Imperial Japan in the Shadowrun Universe came from searching the internet - there are bits and pieces of canon all over the place but no specific Japan sourcebook like you'd find for Seattle, for example. I was actually surprised at this, given what a huge influence Japan is on the setting. Much of what I learned came from here: http://shadowrun.wikia.com/wiki/Japanese_Imperial_State and then I did some adjusting, tweaking and changing to fit Mirrorshades.

Narita Spaceport

I think a lot of campaigns forget or gloss over how much space bullshit there actually is in Shadowrun - there's a whole adventure arc about intercepting a comet, for example, in the third edition of the game. I feel like it would have been great to see Bomb Threat take their particular brand of chaos to the moon.

Locations of Interest

The other big influence on the Japan arc was my three week trip to Tokyo in 2013. I visited every place on this list and used that visit to help inform me about what Toyko would look and feel like. A house that the characters visited was the place I stayed in Ikebukuro and was described from memory. Use what you know in your games, fictionalize and bend it, but all of GMing is just describing things. Easiest to do when you've seen them with your own eyes, ne?

So That the Yaks Can Move In

I've recently started a playthrough of the Yakuza series of games. I can't imagine how much weirder this arc would have been if I'd played those first. My god.

